HOW TO NETWORK: INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS
How to Network: Informational Interviews

An informational interview, sometimes called a networking interview, is a conversation that you arrange with someone who is working for an organization, or is in a role, that interests you. This is a great way to learn about an industry, accelerate your job search, expose yourself to new opportunities, get tailored advice, and expand your network—all in one conversation!

**STEP 1: CHOOSE FIELDS OF INTEREST AND DO YOUR RESEARCH**


**STEP 2: FIND PEOPLE TO INTERVIEW**

a. Talk to family, friends, professors, former and current managers to find people with experience in your field of interest.

b. Using [idealist.org](http://idealist.org), [monster.com](http://monster.com), or other job sites, find organizations whose work interests you. Visit their websites’ “About,” “Our Team,” or “Staff” pages to see who might be an ideal person to connect with.

c. Use LinkedIn’s “See Alumni” feature to find UC graduates to connect with.

Using the LinkedIn search box on your homepage, type in “University of Cincinnati.” Select the page that says “school,” and then click on “See Alumni.” You can explore UC alums by major, location, industry, company and skills. If you have a connection in common with a potential interviewee, you can request to connect with that interviewee directly. Please note that you will still need to locate an email address in order to contact anyone less than a second-degree connection.
STEP 3: PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Choose 6–8 questions, such as:

• Can you tell me about your career path up to this point?
• What is rewarding about your current job? What is challenging?
• How has your industry changed over the last few years? What trends do you anticipate in the future?
• What advice would you give students or alumni who want to get into this type of work?
• What personality traits or skills have been helpful for you in this work?
• What is a typical day like?
• What is a typical entry-level job title in this field?
• How would you describe your organization’s culture?
• Based on what we’ve talked about, do you know of anyone else it might be helpful for me to reach out to?

STEP 4: CONTACT YOUR INTERVIEWEE

a. Find an email address: use Google, LinkedIn profiles, company websites, personal contacts, and UC’s Alumni Association.

b. Send an introductory email to ask for a 20–30 minute conversation—by phone or in-person. Do not ask for their help in finding a job.

c. Politely follow-up after 5 business days.

Sample Email Script Requesting An Informational Interview

Subject: UC Student Interested in [their career field]

Hi Ms. Caroll,

My name is [your name] and I’m a [your major] major about to graduate in [expected graduation year] from UC. I found your information on LinkedIn and was hoping you would be willing to speak with me a bit about your work. I see that you majored in [their major] as well and I’m particularly interested in how to go about finding entry-level positions in this area and what types of graduate programs may be a good fit for this type of work.

Please let me know if you might have 30 minutes to connect with me by phone sometime in the next few weeks. I would love to hear the perspective of someone who’s already in the field so that I can plan my next steps. Thanks for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you. I’ve attached my resume so that you can get a sense of my background.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your phone]
[Your email address]
STEP 5: CONDUCT THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

a. If in-person, dress as you would for a job interview
b. Arrive early
c. Start the conversation with a 10–20 second overview of your background and interests
d. Ask your prepared questions, allowing the conversation to organically flow
e. Keep the conversation to 30 minutes

STEP 6: FOLLOW-UP

a. Send a thank you note for the conversation within 24 hours
b. Write down any reactions, observations or insights. Note whether or not this role, company or industry feels like a good fit for you.
c. If you had a positive interaction, stay in touch with the person. Let them know if you followed-up on advice they gave you or update them on how things are going for you. They are now a part of your network.